

Message Text

SECRET

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FOLLOWING REPEAT SECSTATE FROM CAMP DAVID
DTG 061431Z SEP 78 SENT ACTION DAMASCUS INFO
DEPARTMENT OF STATE 06 SEP 78

QUOOTE S E C R E T NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, SY, US, XF

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE FOR PRESIDENT ASSAD

1. PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT
CARTER TO PRESIDENT ASSAD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. BEGIN TEXT.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:
OVER RECENT WEEKS, I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING CLOSELY WITH
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SECRETARY VANCE THE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND WOULD LIKE
TO SHARE MY CONCERNS WITH YOU.

I UNDERSTAND THE INTEREST IN STABILITY ON SYRIA'S BORDERS
AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH LED TO YOUR INITIAL DECISION
TO INTRODUCE SYRIAN FORCES INTO LEBANON. I BELIEVE THE
UNITED STATES AND SYRIA HAVE SHARED THIS INTEREST IN A

UNIFIED LEBANON WHICH COULD ONCE AGAIN MAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND PROGRESS IN THE AREA. SYRIA ALONG WITH ITS ARAB PARTNERS HAS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT BUT IMPORTANT IN BRINGING PEACE TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

WHAT CONCERNS ME NOW IS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE FRAGMENTATION OF LEBANON IF THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT CANNOT SOON BE RESTORED. TO ALLOW TIME FOR THIS, I WOULD STRONGLY URGE THAT YOU GIVE URGENT CONSIDERATION TO THE IDEA OF A CEASEFIRE AND STANDFAST WHICH SECRETARY VANCE MENTIONED IN HIS RECENT LETTER.

I AM WRITING TO ASK WHETHER YOU FEEL THERE IS ANY OTHER STEP THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN THAT COULD BRING AN END TO THE FIGHTING ONCE AND FOR ALL AND PROVIDE A CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH THE IMPORTANT FACTIONS IN LEBANON COULD TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE WORK OF REBUILDING LEBANON AS A NATION UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT. SECRETARY VANCE HAS EARLIER SHARED SOME OF HIS THOUGHTS WITH YOU, BUT I WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE TO HAVE YOUR VIEWS.

I AM CONCERNED BECAUSE OF THE LONGER TERM STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST, AND I AM DISTURBED THAT FURTHER FIGHTING IN LEBANON COULD BECOME THE
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TRIGGER FOR A WIDER WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST. I AM ALSO DEEPLY MOVED BY WHAT CONTINUED FIGHTING IN LEBANON WILL DO TO THE PEOPLE THERE. AS YOU KNOW, MANY AMERICANS ARE IN TOUCH WITH RELATIVES THERE, AND WE RECEIVE CONSTANT REPORTING ON THE HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF THE TRAGEDY THERE.;
8 7,\$34 5-,\$, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT THIS WILL REACH YOU AT THE END OF THE HOLY HOLIDAYS. MAY THE BLESSINGS OF THIS SEASON SUSTAIN YOU.

SINCERELY, JIMMY CARTER. END TEXT.

VANCE

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

NNN

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